

A C T

OF THE

Associate Synod,

DECLARING THE GROUNDS

Upon which *Supplies* were granted to these
Congregations of the *Separating Brethren*,
who applied for the same.

A N D

GIVING THE REASONS

Why they have not proceeded *at present*, in
a Way of *ECCLESIASTICK*
CENSURE against the said *Brethren*.

E D I N B U R G H.

Printed by WILLIAM GRAY, and Sold at his House,
at Magdalen's Chapel, Cowgate Head; and by W. Smith
in Edinburgh; J. Beugo in Dunfermline; A. Nerry in
Perth; J. Jaffrey in Stirling; J. Meurose in Kilmar-
nock; T. Caverhill in Jedburgh; G. Paton in Linlith-
gow; W. Johnston in Linton; and W. Pringle in Stew,
MDCCXLIX.

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ACT

OF THE

Associate Synod, &c.

At *Dunfermline* the *Seventh* Day of *September*, one *Thousand* seven hundred and forty nine Years.

THE *Associate Synod*, taking into their serious Consideration, the many sinful and cruel Methods taken by the *Separating Brethren*, to ruin the Character, and break the Ministry of the Members of this Synod; and the many false and calumnious Reports, raised and industriously spread by them, for accomplishing this bad End; particularly, by alledging that we have dropt all Regard to the Discipline of Christ's House, because we have not proceeded to *Ecclesiastick Censure* against them, before we granted Supply to some of their Congregations, who had applied for the same; They do, therefore, judge it their Duty, to bring forth the whole of this Matter to *open View*, for their own necessary Vindication, and that the present and succeeding Generations may see, that they have study'd to act in Conformity to the Rules of the Word, and the Practice of the Church in former Times agreeable thereto; And this they resolve to

do, *First*, By describing the *Progress* by which they came to this Step, of sending *Supplies* to these Congregations of the Separating Brethren, who applied for the same, and *then*, by giving the *Reasons* why they at length supplied the said Congregations; And *lastly*, Open up the *Grounds* on which they did so, without proceeding at *first Instance*, to inflict any *formal Ecclesiastick Censure* upon the Ministers of these Congregations, altho' otherways, they *justly deserved* the same.

The World will easily see, how slowly the *Synod* moved, before they came to a *full Purpose* to grant *Supply* to the Congregations of the *Separating Ministers*, from the following *Act* of their Conduct in this Matter, taken from the *Minutes of Synod*.

The awful *Schism* and *Rupture*, which occasioned the *Supplies* spoken of, was permitted to fall out, in adorable Providence, at *Edinburgh*, upon the 9th of *April 1747*, when 13 *Ministers* and 10 *Elders* went off from the *Synod*, in a most *irregular Manner*, leaving 16 *Ministers*, and, at least 13 *Elders* behind them, among whom were the *Moderator* and *Clerk*. This was the *lesser* Number of *twenty three*, withdrawing from the *greater* Number of *twenty nine* Members, and that without pretending to make a *Secession* from them, but on the contrary, arrogating to themselves the *whole Power* of the Court, tho' they were the *Minority* at least by six. And tho' their Number afterwards increased, by the *falling away*

away of some Members to them, and some new Ones of their own Party, whom they have pretended to Ordain, yet that makes no Odds as to their new and unprecedented Constitution, for tho' there were an Hundred of them now, they were no more when they first usurped the Power of the Associate Synod, but 23 to 29, as appears from the Minutes of that Sederunt, at which they made the Separation; which is the very reverse of Presbyterian Principles, and makes their Constitution absolutely null and new; and that it was a new One indeed, is confessed and acknowledged by themselves, for Mr. John Cleland Minister at Balphron, tho' formerly a Member of the Associate Synod, was added to the Roll of their pretended Meeting of Synod April 15, 1747, as may be seen in the Introduction to their Acts and Proceedings Page 10. And at the first Meeting of some separating Ministers, within the Bounds of the Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline, in Subordination to their new Constitute Synod, at Perth, May 5th, foresaid Year, it appears from the Minutes of that pretended Presbytery, published in the Narrative of their Separation Page 47, That Mr. John Erskine and Mr. William Mair, having declared their Satisfaction with the Constitution of Synod, as constitute at Edinburgh April 10th, and their Willingness to take their Seat as Members of that Presbytery, " AS
 " NOW CONSTITUTE, in Subordination to
 " the Synod AS PRESENTLY CONSTI-
 " TUTE,

“ TUTE, --- their Names were *added* to the “ Roll ;” which makes it evident to a Demonstration, that their *Constitution* is now quite different from what it was before, and upon a quite other Foundation, else, why do they ADD these, who were formerly *Members*, to their Roll, as if they had never been *Members before*.

However, no sooner had they passed their extravagant Acts, asserting, and further asserting their new *Constitution*, and finding that the whole Power and Authority of the Associate Synod was devolved on them, and that the Majority both of Ministers and Elders, from whom they had separated, had fallen from all Right and Title to any present actual Exercise of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, *than presently*, these separating Ministers demanded their respective *Sessions* to constitute in *Subordination* to their new *Constitute Synod*, and approve of their *Acts* and *Proceedings*, several Months before they came to publick View, refusing to hold Session with any Elders, but such as were willing to subordinate to that Constitution, before they knew what it was; and refusing sealing Ordinances to such, as would not promise before Hand, to ly open to their new Light, before it was brought forth; which was upon the Matter a requiring them, to pin their Faith entirely to their Sleeve, or to believe as they pretended to believe.

This arbitrary Imposition upon the Consciences of the Lord's People, and the blind im-
plicity

placite Faith which they required of them, occasioned several heavy *Complaints* from *Sessions*, and considerable Numbers in the *Congregations* of some of these separating Brethren, which were tabled before the Meeting of the *Associate Synod* at *Stirling* *June 17, 1747*, such as,

A *Representation* from *Ten Elders* of the *Associate Session* of *Linlithgow*, who had *protested* against Mr. *Andrew Clarkson* and three of his Elders for *constituting* the *Session* in *Subordination* to the *new Constitute Synod*, and complaining that He, and the said three Elders refused to allow them to sit with them, but in *Subordination* to the new Constitution; and when they insisted upon their Privilege, Mr. *Clarkson* took hold of the *Minutes* (the *Clerk* being one of the *Protesters*) and with his three Elders, *withdrew* from the ordinary Place of Meeting, and *keep'd Session* by themselves; and therefore craving the Synod's Advice what to do in their present Circumstances.

There was read also an *Extract* from the *Minutes* of the *Associate Session* of *Haddingtoun*, dated at *Haddingtoun* *May 4th 1747*, bearing, That after the Session was constitute by Mr. *Robert Archibald* as *Moderator*, He the said Mr. *Archibald* told the Session, that he looked upon their *sitting with Him*, to be an *approving* of the Separation, made by him and some of his Brethren at the last Synod, and that he could not sit in Session with any, but such as were in *Subordination* to that Synod

nod whereof he was a Member. That hereupon *thirteen* Elders and *five* Deacons *protested* That their sitting in Session, shall not be construed an Homologation of the Moderator's being a Member of a new pretended Synod, which he publickly from the *Pulpit*, and now *judicially* declares himself to be. That immediately thereafter, the *Moderator protested* in his own Name, and in the Name of all that should adhere to him, that he and they could act in no other Capacity, than in a *Subordination* to that, which his Brethren of the opposite Side, call'd a new pretended Synod, and thereupon took *Instruments*; and there adhered to him *five* Elders and *two* Deacons. At the same Time the above Number of *thirteen* Elders and *five* Deacons *protested*, that it shall be lawful and warrantable for them (being by far the *Majority*) to act as the Session of the Associate Congregation of *Haddingtoun*, and apply the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* in *Subordination* to the *old Associate Synod*, for a Minister to hold Session with them, and dispense Ordinances to the said Congregation. Upon the other Hand, Mr. *Archibald counterprotested*, " that his pastoral Relation to the Associate Congregation of *East Lothian* should remain firm and valid, that He and the Members of Session adhering to him, are the only lawful and right constitute Session of the said Congregation, and that they shall act accordingly; and that they shall apply to the Judicatories to which they have declared

“ declared their Subordination, as they shall
 “ have Occasion.”

The *Reasons* supporting the above *Protests* of the *thirteen Elders* and *five Deacons*, to which a great Body of the People afterwards adhered, as given in to the foreſaid Meeting of Synod, are in Subſtance, as follow (1.) That Mr. *Archibald* had declared, that no Presbytery or Session, was, or could be lawful in their Constitution, but in a Subordination to the Synod, *which first met at Mr. Gib's House April 10th 1747.* (2.) That he had asserted from the *Pulpit*, That the Ministers from whom he and others had separated, had *deserted the Testimony*, had made *Acts in Favour of Sin*, had given *Liberty to Perjury*, and *Conscience-debauching Oaths*, that he exhorted the People to *separate* from them, and to side themselves, for that he was *fix'd*, adding, *If God be God, follow him, If Baal, follow him.* That thus the Sabbath was greatly profaned, by spending the Time in tearing the Characters of his Brethren, and thereby occasioning idle Debates among Christians on the Lord's Day, to the marring of the Success of the Gospel, and hardening the Wicked in Sin. (3.) That since the Controversy about the *Burgeſs Oath* was the Ground of the Separation. and since Mr. *Archibald* had alledged, that all who did not join him in that Matter, had turned their Backs upon the Testimony, the Blood of such as could not then see the *Burgeſs Oath* to be sinful (if it was their

Sin not to see it) must ly upon Mr. *Archibald's*
 Head, in regard he had *never given publick*
Testimony against the Sinfulness of it, before
 the *Separation*. (4.) That a blind implicate
 Subjection was required of them to their new
 Constitution, and their Acts and Proceedings,
 and particularly to their tearing of their Bre-
 thren's Commission, and finding that they had
 fallen from all Right and Title to any present
 actual Exercise of the Keys of the Kingdom
 of Heaven. (5.) That the said *Protesters* did
 not see the *Separation* of their *Ministers* and
others, from the *Associate Synod*, to be war-
 ranted in the Word of God, the Standards of
 this Church, or in any of the Testimonies e-
 mitted by *this Synod*, or by the Practice of the
reformed Churches in any former Period. That
 on the contrary the said Separation had thrown
 the Church of Christ into Disorder, and con-
 sequently could not be of God, who is not
 the *Author of Confusion but of Peace*. Their
 Petition, *upon the whole*, bears, that since
 they are debarr'd from the Ordinances of the
 Gospel as dispensed by Mr. *Archibald*, unless
 they blindly subject to the new Constitution
 and their arbitrary Proceedings, that therefore
 the Synod would take their clamant Case into
 Consideration, and think upon Means for their
 Relief.

There was read likeways a Petition, sign'd
 by *three Elders*, and several Members of the
 Associate Congregation in the *East of Fife*,
 bearing, That *five of the Elders* had made

a Motion, in the first Meeting of Session after the Rupture, *April 20. 1747*, Whether they might not give *Attestations*, to such in the Congregation, as scrupled to apply, at present, to the separating Ministers, to get the Benefit of sealing Ordinances from the other Associate Ministers, who were continuing upon their former Footing, *ay and untill they get further Light in the present Controversy?* This Motion was *protested against* by Mr. *William Campbell* the Moderator, as inconsistent with their *Acts of Synod* at their last Meeting, and rejected by the Majority of the Session; whereupon the said *five Elders protested*, that they should be at Liberty to attest such of the Congregation as should apply to them, to receive sealing Ordinances from such *Associate Ministers* as were standing upon the Grounds of their *Secession* from the present *Judicatories*. In Consequence hereof, the Petition bears a Complaint of Mr. *Campbell's* rash and irregular Separation, and his imposing new and doubtful Terms of Communion upon them, contrary to Rom. xiv. 1. *Him that is weak in the Faith receive ye, but not to doubtful Disputations;* and craves the Synod's Advice how to act and behave in their present Difficulties.

Notwithstanding of the *Clamancy* of the above *Representations* and *Petitions*, the Synod delay'd giving any *Particular Answer* to them at present, and the Moderator was desired in Name of the Synod, to signify to the *Commissioners*, that it is the *Mind* of the Synod,

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“ That they wait with Patience for some
“ Time, till Matters come to a further Bear-
“ ing; and in the mean Time, that they essay
“ a diligent Search, into the Grounds of
“ the Lord’s Quarrel and Controversy with
“ Ministers and People, and humble them-
“ selves under the mighty Hand of God, be-
“ cause of the manifest Tokens of his righteous
“ Anger gone forth against us.”

When the *Associate Synod* met at *Dunfermline* Sept. 2d fore said Year, there were *Petitions* transmitted by the *Committee of Bills* to the Synod, from the *three Congregations* above named, craving, that since the former Grounds of withdrawing from their Ministers still subsisted, and that there was no Appearance of their returning to their Duty, that therefore the Synod would be pleased to appoint them *Supply* of Preaching, and an *ordain’d Minister* to dispense the Sacrament of Baptism to their Children. The *Reasons* supporting the *Petition* from *Ceres*, were, that their Minister Mr. *Campbell* had refused sealing Ordinances to such as would not profess that they were willing to ly open to the *New Light* which the *pretended Synod* was giving them, however much they were *convinced at present*, that the Steps they had taken were *contrary* to the Word of God, and the approven Acts and Constitutions of this Church, and likeways to such as would not judicially acknowledge before the Session their Sin in not observing the *Fasts* appointed by the said *pretended Synod* for im-
periously

periously persecuting their Brethren, and also what he called their Sin, in applying to this Synod in June last; declaring that they could not submit to these *new and strange Terms of Communion*, without offering manifest Violence to the Light of their Consciences, upon the best Information they had Access to. The *Petitioners* from *Haddingtoun* complain, that Mr. *Archibald* continues to rail against them daily from the *Pulpit*, alledging that they were doing all they could to *expell Christ out of our Coasts*, that they were *Betrayers* of the *Son of God with a Kiss*, sometimes calling them in direct Terms *Judasess*, and that they were *willfully* going astray, and *led Captive by Satan at his Will*, with several other bitter Invectives of this Kind; adding, that some of them had, notwithstanding of the *above Railery*, applied to him for the Sacrament of Baptism to their Children, but he peremptorily refused them, unless they would declare their *Subordination* to the *new Synod* whereof he was a Member. Whereby it would seem that he would admit to sealing Ordinances, those whom he had described and set forth as the worst of Men, *provided only*, that they *complied* with the *new Constitution*.

But notwithstanding of these rigorous Impositions upon, and unreasonable Treatment of the *Complainers*, The *Synod*, after reasoning upon the said *Petitions* and *Representations*, and being loth to do any Thing *suddenly*, which might tend to widen the Breach, agreed, *further*

further to delay granting any Supply of Preaching at present, to the Petitioners or their Constituents, within the Bounds of these Congregations, where there are Ministers settled; only, that upon their producing sufficient Testimonials, Church Privileges may be dispensed unto them, without the Bounds of their respective Congregations. And the Synod recommends it to the People of these Congregations, that they beware of leaving their Ministers abruptly, without signifying previously unto them, the Reasons which induce them to do so.

At the next ordinary Meeting of the Associate Synod at Stirling, April 12. 1749, besides renewed Petitions from Haddingtoun and Ceres for Supply of Preaching, there were transmitted from the Committee of Bills, and read in Synod, the following Representations and Petitions.

1. *A Representation and Petition from the Associate Congregation of Linlithgow sign'd by six Elders, and forty two Members of the said Congregation, in their own Name, and in the Name of several others, setting forth (besides what was represented as above to the Synod in June last Year by ten of their Elders) That Mr. Andrew Clarkson had publickly, in Face of the Congregation, asserted, that the Confession of Faith as ratified by the Revolution-Parliament, was not his Confession, nor could be the Confession of any Christian's Faith, in regard the Scripture Quotations were not inserted either in the Body of the Act, or upon the*

the *Margine*, whereas (say they) it was the Parliament's Business to *ratify the Words* of the *thirty three Chapters* of the Confession, *formerly* received by this Church, *as agreeable to*, and *founded on the Word of God*; besides, the *Parliament* (in the *first Chapter* of said Confession) *adopted and ratified all the Books of the Old and New Testament expressly*, as being "all given by Inspiration of God to be "the Rule of Faith and Life." They add moreover, that Mr. *Clarkson* said, That the Headship of Christ over his Church was *buried* at the *Revolution*, not considering (say they) that in the *Westminster* Confession, read in open Parliament, and embodied with the Laws of the Kingdom, it is asserted, Chap. 25. § 6. "There is no other Head of the Church but "the Lord Jesus Christ." And Chap. 30. § 1. "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his "Church, hath therein appointed a Govern- "ment in the Hand of Church Officers, dis- "tinct from the civil Magistrate." And they complain, that in Consequence of these and several other Assertions of like Nature, the said Mr. *Clarkson* had narrowed the Terms of Communion to his new Principles, refusing sealing Ordinances to any, but such as would tamely adopt them, and blindly go forth into the untrodden Paths of the new Constitution, and therefore craving *Supply* of Sermon, since their Minister was openly professing himself a Member of *another Judicatory* then he and they were *formerly Subject unto*, and had *dis-
serted*

stated the Principles which he and they professed to own at his *Ordination* among them.

2. A *Representation and Petition* from the Majority of the Members of the *Associate Kirk-session* of the *Town and Parish of Perth*, subscribed by *six Elders* and *five Deacons*, shewing, That Mr. *George Brown* their *Minister* having separated from the Synod on the 9th of *April* 1747, and join'd in a new and sinful Constitution in Mr *Gib's* House the following Day, *two* of their Number had in a *Constitute Session* upon the 23d of *April* foresaid, testify'd and protested against the said Separation and new Constitution, which Protestation was marked and practically adhered to, by the Majority of the Session ever since that Time. That the said Mr. *Brown* had, ever since, not only refused to hold Session with the Majority of the Members, because they would not meet in Subordination to the new Constitution, but likewise, that he had privately made up a *New Session*, by taking in the Elders of the *Country Parishes* of *Tippermoor; Kinnoul, Rynd, Aberdalgie, &c.* who were never formerly Constituent Members of the *Associate Session* of the *Town and Parish of Perth*, and that without the Advice and Consent of the said *Associate Congregation*, which they look upon as an evident *Intrusion* upon the said Congregation and *Associate Session* thereof, contrary to our known and received Principles. Moreover they represent, That upon Sabbath *February* 7th 1748, the said Mr. *Brown* had pub-
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lickly, in a most arbitrary Manner, at his own
 Hand, pretended to *exauorate* the Members
 of Session, who could not subordinate them-
 selves to the New Constitute Synod, by alledg-
 ing that they were only *private Men*. that
 they had no Authority as Office-Bearers in that
 Congregation; and accordingly *warned* the
 People to beware of *owning them* in their Office
 or strengthening their Hands therein, yet at the
 same Time acknowledged, that he had *nothing*
to lay to their moral Character: Further, that
 upon the *Sabbath* following, he said in his
 Sermon, That the *Burgefs Oath* was *more sin-*
ful than any of the *State Oaths*, because the
State Oaths only *seal'd* the *Civil Constitution*,
 whereas the *Burgefs Oath* *seal'd* the *Constituti-*
on, both of *Church* and *State*, and that the *Tes-*
timony was stated not only against the *Corrup-*
tions and *Defections* of the Established Church,
 but also against the *Constitution* thereof, at, and
 ever since the *Revolution*, and asserted, that he
 look'd upon it, not to be in the Power of Na-
 ture to prove it lawful, to *separate* from the
Defections and *Corruptions* of a Church, and
not from the Profession thereof. And that when
 speaking of Admission to the Lord's Table,
 he expressed himself to the following Purpose,
 That such as had sworn the *Burgefs Oath*, and
 did not see the same to be sinful, and such as
 did defend and maintain the Lawfulness there-
 of, were *guilty of swearing*, or of *consenting to*
a swearing of Christ's Cause out of the Land,
 and so not fit to sit or incorporate with the

Lord's People in sealing his Work and Cause. And upon the whole craving the Synod's Advice how they should behave in their present lamentable Situation and Circumstances.

3. A *Petition*, sign'd by *sixty two* Persons in *Aughtermuchty* and other Places within the Associate Congregation of *Abernethy*, referring to a *larger Paper*, intituled, *The humble Representation and Petition of several Members of Societies and others, within the Community of Abernethy, to the Minister and Elders of the said Community, for Redress of Grievances.* Which *Grievances*, with the Substance of their *Illustration*, are as follow.

(1.) The *Melancholy Rupture* that hath taken Place amongst a witnessing Body, anent a religious Clause in some *Burgefs Oaths*, which, *they think*, should by no Means have occasioned any Division for these *two Reasons*. 1st, Because it is the true Religion, (viz. *which is contained in our Standards*) which is bound to therein, which is in itself *intrinsically good*, being a *Divine Religion*, and therefore a *Compleat Religion* and *perfect* in all its Parts, and so no other Religion than that which is adhered to in the *Testimony*, as the true *Protestant Religion*, which is said to be *established by Law* in the *Representation* of some Ministers and Elders to the Assembly 1732 anent *Grievances*, P. 5. which *Representation* is subscribed by Mr. *Moncrief*, and adopted in the *Testimony* P. 130. 2^{dly}, Because the Lawfulness of the said religious Clause, in the se-

cond

cond Period of Reformation, is still owned and acknowledged by all, which is upon the Matter a yielding the Lawfulness thereof in this Period, in regard the True Religion professed and authorised by Law, within this Realm, at and since the Revolution, is the *same* as in the *second Period*, only (which is Matter of Regret) wanting a *Covenanting Form*, or, not settled in a *Covenanting Manner*.

(2.) They complain of it as a Grievance, That an Act was pass'd in the Synod at *Edinburgh April 1746*, finding, that the swearing the said religious Clause, does not agree to the present State and Circumstances of the Testimony for Religion and Reformation, Altho' the Sinfulness thereof has not been pretended to be proven from any Passage of the whole Scripture, and therefore such a Decision ought to be rejected according to our known Principles *Old Confession Art. 20.* " So far as the
 " Council proveth the Determination and
 " Commandment that it giveth, by the plain
 " Word of God, so soon do we reverence and
 " embrace the same. But if Men under the
 " Name of a Council, pretend to forge unto
 " us new Articles of our Faith, or to make
 " Constitutions repugning to the Word of God,
 " then utterly we must refuse the same." They add, That since a *Protest* is standing against the said Act, they look upon it as of no Force.

(3.) They complain, that the foresaid Decision is made a *Term* of Ministerial and Christian Communion, especially as it is a Point

entirely new, and never was a Ground of Testimony in this National Church, yea, by themselves confessed to be *incapable of Scripture Proof*; yet it is pressed hard upon the Consciences of People, and they refused Church Privileges, unless they profess that they are lying open to their Light in that Matter, which is a betraying true Liberty of Conscience and Reason also, and a requiring of an *implicite Faith* and *blind Obedience*, quite contrary to the Scripture, Isa. viii. 20. *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them, and to Confession of Faith Chap. 1.*

§ 7. " Those Things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for Salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some Place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due Use of the ordinary Means, may attain unto a sufficient Understanding of them." And Chap. 20. § 2. " God alone is the Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of Men, which are in any Thing contrary to his Word, or beside it, in Matters of Faith or Worship."

(4.) They complain, That when a *Vote* was stated and carried in the Synod at Edinburgh April 1747, That the *foresaid Decision* anent the religious Clause in some Burges's Oaths, pass'd in April 1746, should not be a *Term of Ministerial and Christian Communion*,

ay and until the making of the same to be so.
 shall be referred by Way of Overture to Pres-
 byterys and Kirk-Sessions. A Declaration was
 made, signifying that the Synod was not a
 lawful nor right Constitute Court of Christ in
 the said Vote, and that all who voted therein,
 had abjured, or allowed an abjuring of the
 whole of the Testimony; and thus they the
 rather complain of, because in the *first Testi-*
mony P. 48. The *first* Charge against the pre-
 vailing Party in the present Judicatories, as
 a Ground of Secession from them, was their
 breaking down our beautiful Presbyterian Con-
 stitution, by making Acts which were to be
 binding Rules and Constitutions to the Church,
 without first transmitting them to inferiour Ju-
 dicatories, and having their Opinion and Con-
 sent reported thereupon, expressly contrary to
 the *Barrier Acts* of this Church, pass'd in the
General Assemblies 1639 and 1641 and re-
 newed by *Assemblies* 1695 and 1697. The
 foresaid *Testimony* P. 49, makes the Substance
 of these Acts to amount to this " That Over-
 " tures as to any Acts that are to be binding
 " Rules to the Church, should be approved
 " by all at Home, and that they should be
 " pass'd into Acts only if the more general
 " Opinion of the diffusive Church of *Scotland*,
 " agree thereunto." And it is there observed,
 That " this Fence and Guard is wisely con-
 " trived upon our Doctrine, Worship, Go-
 " vernment and Discipline." Now, say they,
 For any Number of Men, at one Time to ap-
 prove

prove of these Acts, as a Part of our beautiful Presbyterian Constitution, and to call the counteracting of them a breaking down thereof, and an Invasion of the Rights and Libertys of the diffusive Church, and in a *few Years thereafter*, to reckon the *Observance* of them, by a Motion of this Kind, so very scandalous, as to be a sufficient Ground for *Separation*, is surely very *highly inconsistent*. And if the putting of these Acts in Practice be a sufficient Ground of depriving Ministers and Elders of their Offices, then they who did bear that Character in the *second* Period of Reformation, forfeited their Right also, for it is evident that the Larger Catechism was transmitted to inferior Judicatories, before it was approven in the General Assembly; as is plain from their Act approving the same *July 2d 1648*.

(5.) They complain, that the *separating Brethren* having erected themselves into a *new constitute Synod*, and having published Acts *asserting*, and *further asserting* their Constitution, did thereupon presume to censure their Brethren, and upon the Matter excommunicate all who would not be in Subordination to their pretended Constitution, while yet they have not made it appear from any *one Text* of Scripture, or *Article* of our Confession of Faith, or *Acts* of reforming Assemblies, wherein they are *censurable*, whereas the Form of Process ordains that nothing be admitted by any Judicatory as a Ground of Process for Censure, but what hath been declared censurable by the Word of God,

God, or some Act or universal Custom of this National Church agreeable thereto.

(6.) They complain, that the separating Brethren deny to Elders the *Power* of judging in *Matters of Doctrine* and *Cases of Conscience*, wherein they symbolize with *Papists* and *Episcopalians*, but contradict the Judgment of all sound *Presbyterians*, as may appear from *Gillespy's Assertions*, The *Divine Right of Church Government* P. 153 and 238 to 250, and the *Treatise* of ruling Elders and Deacons, ascribed to Mr. *Guthrie* P. 57, 58.

(7.) They complain, that the said separating Brethren, in order to support their new Constitution, have stated a *Quarrel* with the present National and authorised Profession, or the Settlement of Religion at the *Revolution*, as if our *Secession were stated therefrom*, whereas the contrary is evident from the *Title* and *Scope* of the *Act* and *Testimony*, and the *Papers* therein adopted, particularly *first Testimony* P. 45, 46. " Our Secession is not from
" the Church of *Scotland*, we own her Doc-
" trine contain'd in her Confession of Faith;
" we adhere to her covenanted, presbyterian
" Church Government, Discipline and Wor-
" ship : Neither is our Secession from these,
" who are cleaving to our covenanted Prin-
" ciples, and who are affected with the Grie-
" vances we complain of, and are in their se-
" veral Spheres wrestling against the same;
" but it is from a *Party* who have got the Ma-
" nagement in their Hands, and who have got
" the

“ the Majority on their Side in the Judicatories,
 “ particularly in our Assemblies and Commis-
 “ sions, and who are carrying on a Course of De-
 “ fection from our reformed and covenanted
 “ Principles, and are suppressing Ministerial
 “ Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying a-
 “ gainst their present Backslidings, by inflicting
 “ Censures upon Ministers, for witnessing by
 “ Protestation and otherways against the
 “ same.” Mr. *Wilson* and Mr. *Moncrief* in
 their *Representation* P. 39 adhere to their
Ordination Vows in the *Revolution-Church*,
 and P. 34. they call the *Revolution*, the late
happy and glorious Revolution: And Mr. *Wil-*
son in his *Defence* Page 65. says, “ The Se-
 “ ceding Ministers have always refused, and
 “ they do upon good Grounds refuse, that
 “ they have made any Secession from the
 “ Church of *Scotland*. If the Church of
 “ *Scotland* is considered, as her Principles are
 “ held forth from the Word of God, in her
 “ Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Ca-
 “ techisms, Form of Church Government,
 “ Directory for Worship, and other laudable
 “ Acts and Constitutions of this National
 “ Church, the Seceding Ministers have open-
 “ ly declared and acknowledged their Ad-
 “ herence to all these, in their judicial Ac-
 “ and Testimony.” And Page 71. “ I hope
 “ (says he) I may affirm in behalf of the Mem-
 “ bers of the Associate *Presbytery*. that they
 “ desire thro’ Grace, never to secede from the
 “ Constitution and Principles of the National
 “ Church

“ Church of *Scotland*, but to contribute their
 “ Endeavours for the Support and Defence
 “ of the same.” From all which and many
 other Particulars which might be named, it is
 evident that they make the *Testimony* manifest-
 ly to *contradict itself*, when they make it to
 state a Quarrel with that Religion, which it
 plainly gives Testimony unto, it being a Tes-
 timony for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline
 and Government of the National Church of
Scotland, and against several Steps of Defec-
 tion from the same in former and present Times.

(8.) They complain, that, in publick Wor-
 ship, such *Petitions* are put up and *Thanks* re-
 turned, anent the present Controversy, as
 they cannot *join with*, and that in *Sermons*
 such injurious Reflections are laid to their Bre-
 threns Charge, as have a Tendency to bleak-
 en their Character and Reputation, and weak-
 en their Hands in the Work of the Ministry,
 contrary to solemn Vows and Engagements late-
 ly come under, for strengthening one another's
 Hands therein. Upon the whole, they earnest-
 ly intreat and beseech the *Associate Session* of
Abernetby, Speedily to give up with their pre-
 sent Constitution, in Subordination to a *new*
pretended Synod, and to constitute in Subordi-
 nation to the *only lawful and right constitute*
Associate Synod which meets ordinarily at *Stir-*
ling, and that the *Minister and Elder* from the
 said *Session* may return and take their Seats
 therein, as formerly.

The *Petition* given in with the above Re-

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presentation to the foresaid Meeting of Synod bears, that the *Subscribers* of the said Representation were declared *Censurable*, and accordingly *excluded* from *sealing Ordinances*, and that the *Commissioners* who presented the same, were *summoned* to their *pretended Presbytery*, for giving in (as they alledged) a Paper against the Testimony: And they crave that they may have a Day of Fasting observed among them, and frequent Supply of Preaching, especially as they have it to lament, with Respect to these living within the Bounds of the neighbouring Parishes join'd to the Community of *Abernethy*, that ever since their Association with them, they *never received Ministerial Visits*, either to their *Families* or to their *Sick*, however much afflicted, which makes their Case so much the more clamant.

4. A *Petition* and *Representation* sign'd by *seven Elders* and *forty nine* other Members of the Associate Congregation of *Edinburgh*, bearing, that at the first ordinary Meeting of Session after the Breach, Mr. *Adam Gib* declared, that he would not constitute the Session till he knew the Mind of the Members with Respect to the *new Situation* that they were in Providence brought into, adding, that there was one Member, *viz.* Mr. *Moubray* with whom he could by no Means sit, because he had already discovered himself in Opposition to the Synod whereof he (the said Mr. *Gib*) was a Member, whereby he had *forfeited all Right* to the present *Exercise* of the *Keys* of the *King-*

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dom of Heaven. Several Members insisted, that Mr. *Gib* should first constitute the Session, and then proceed to judge of Mr. *Moubray's* Conduct, but by no Means could he be prevail'd upon to do so, unless they would first agree to *thrust out* Mr. *Moubray*, and then declare their *Adherence* and *Subjection* to the *new Constitution*. Whereupon Mr. *Gib* required those of the Session who adhered to him, to go along with him to his own House, and when he was offering to go out from the Session House, Mr. *Moubray* protested, That in regard the *Majority* of the Session were for constituting upon the former Footing, they should therefore be held as the *only lawful Session* in that Associate Congregation, and that all that Mr. *Gib* should do in the Exercise of Discipline, in a Way of *Separation from them*, should be *void* and *null*, &c. To which Protestation *nine* Members adhered, as did afterwards Mr. *German*, who was at that Time from Home. They complain, that Mr. *Gib* refused sealing Ordinances to such as could not comply with his new Measures, That he arraign'd them from the Pulpit with the blackest Calumnies, such as deserting and abjuring the Testimony, taking Part with the Wicked, in explaining away the Indictment of God's Wrath against the Generation, &c. They further represent, that when meeting in *Bristo Kirk* about advising together what they should do in their present Circumstances, Mr. *Gib* came in, and read a long Libel and Protestation, charging them

with Fraudulency and Breach of Faith to the Congregation, and Breach of Covenant with him, and charged them in the Name of the Lord Jesus to break up their Meeting, lest the Place should become a *Tabera*, and protested that all they did should be null and void, and that it would be a sacrilegious robbing of the Lord, to claim any Thing they had contributed for that Place of Worship, and then went immediately off, without either staying to hear their Answers to his false Charges, or leaving a Copy of the Paper he read, tho' earnestly intreated by severals to do both. And another Meeting of the same Kind being appointed, Mr. *Gib* intimated a *Sermon* to be on the *said Day*, and in the *very Time of Preaching*, read the *foresaid Paper* again, and when at the Conclusion some were offering to reply, he told them, that as he was employed in the Duty of Preaching, the Worship of God ought not to be interrupted; to which *Answer* was made, that He, and not they had interrupted the Worship. And when he had gone on in preaching a little and concluded the Worship, he went hastily off, without either *hearing* what they had to say or *leaving* a Copy of his *Paper to answer*, tho' desired to do it then, as well as at the former Meeting. Upon the whole, they crave Advice how to behave in such deplorable Circumstances. And they further represent in another Paper transmitted to the Synod, that they, with many others who were not present at the subscribing of the for-

former Representation, have no Freedom to attend publick Ordinances dispensed by Mr. Gib, for the Reasons above mentioned, and many others, particularly, that he does not look upon them as a Part of his Charge, as appears not only by his Conduct towards them, but likewise in his publick Prayers, wherein he mentions them, as those who *Once* belonged to the Congregation, but are now counter-acting the Testimony, and violently breaking down as with *Axes* and *Hammers* what they once built up. And being thus shut out from Gospel Ordinances and Church Privileges, they crave *Supply* of Preaching as frequently as possible, till the Lord in his adorable Providence, shall open a Door for their having the Gospel dispensed among them in a more constant Way.

The *Synod* entering upon the Consideration of the above *Representations* and *Petitions*, after much reasoning upon the *Clamancy* of the same, and likewise upon the *Duty* and *Expediency* of granting *present Supply* to the *Petitioners*, without making some *further Attempt* for *reclaiming* these Brethren, who had given Occasion to their People to make such heavy Complaints, a *Brother* was desired to *pray* for Counsel and Direction from the Lord in this Matter; and after Prayer and some further reasoning, the *Synod* agreed to *sist any further Consideration at present of supplying the above Congregations*, until a *pro Re nata* Meeting of Synod at *Falkirk* upon the 24th of May next, and in the mean Time appointed the *Moderator*

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to send a *Letter* to each of the *Separating Brethren*, relative to the said *Affair*, which was read and approven; The *Tenor* whereof follows.

R. D. B.

Stirling April 15. 1748.

“ The Synod met in this Place, consider-
 “ ing that several Petitions for Supply of
 “ Preaching have come before them from
 “ Time to Time, importing, that you and
 “ your Brethren that have separated from the
 “ Synod, have gone off from the Grounds up-
 “ on which you and we made Secession from
 “ the present Backsliding Judicatories, and
 “ upon which the Petitioners acceded to the
 “ Associate Judicatories, and submitted to
 “ your Ministry; and that thro’ deserting these
 “ Grounds, some of you have upon the Mat-
 “ ter deserted your Flocks, and thrust them
 “ away from you, by imposing new Terms
 “ of Communion upon them, not warranted
 “ in the Word of God; and that you have
 “ gone into several disorderly and divisive
 “ Practices, whereby the Lord’s Heritage is
 “ much scattered and broken: Therefore the
 “ Synod, before they appoint Supply to these
 “ in your respective Congregations, who have
 “ made Complaints to us, have appointed me
 “ to acquaint you, that the Synod is to meet
 “ at *Falkirk*, upon *Tuesday* the *24th* Day of
 “ *May* next, and to require, and earnestly de-
 “ sire, that you and your Brethren, (to each
 “ of whom a Letter in these same Words is
 “ sent) may attend the said Meeting, that so
 “ there

" there may be a friendly Conference with
 " Prayer, upon the present Differences that
 " have taken Place among Ministers and Peo-
 " ple of the Association, particularly relating
 " to the Subject of the above named Petitions;
 " whereby you may evidently see the Lenity
 " of the Synod, and their Desire of Peace and
 " Unity in the Lord. This in Name, and
 " by the Appointment of the Associate Synod,
 " is subscribed in their Presence, by

R. D. B.

yours affectionately

DAVID HORN Moder."

WHen the *Synod pro Re nata* met at the
new Church of Falkirk upon the fore-
 said Day, there were Applications from all
 the above-mentioned Places, insisting upon
 their *former Petitions* to the *Synod*, for Ad-
 vice, and Supply of Preaching; And the *Sy-
 nod* entering upon the Consideration of this Af-
 fair, the *Moderator* was desired to *enquire
 publickly*, whether there were any of the Se-
 parating Brethren in the House to whom the
 Synod had wrote for a Conference at this Time,
 or *any from them*; and none of them being pre-
 sent, nor any Word from them, a Motion was
 made and agreed to, namely, to delay this
 Affair till the *Sederunt* in the Afternoon, that
 so in Case any of these Brethren came up, they
 might have an Opportunity of conversing with
 the Synod, upon the Subject of the *Letter*
 written to them, before Supplies were granted
 to their Congregations petitioning for the same.

None

None of the Separating Brethren coming up in the Afternoon, the *Synod*, after some *reasoning* and *Prayer*, found that they could not warrantably *forbear any longer*, to give Ear to the earnest Solicitations of the above Petitioners, complaining that they were more rigidly dealt with by their respective Ministers, and that more heavy and unreasonable Burdens were laid upon them, than ever had been done by the corrupt Judicatories of the Church from whom they had made a Secession: And after several *weighty Reasons* were openly advanced, why the *Synod* should *now at length*, after *so long Delay*, hear the urgent Cries of the Lord's People for *Supply* of Preaching among them, especially as now, after all due Pains used, there appeared *no Ground of Hope* that the said Brethren would come in to any *reasonable Measures*, the *Synod* unanimously agreed to grant *Supply of Preaching to the Petitioners within the Congregations of the Separating Brethren applying to them*, and that, notwithstanding they had not proceeded, for Reasons afterwards to be assigned, to *inflict any Ecclesiastick Censure upon them*; and left it to the Ministers who should be appointed to preach in the said Congregations, to lay before the People the *Reasons* which moved the *Synod* to take this Step. From all which it evidently appears that the *Synod* have been far from being *hasty and forward*, in sending Supplies to the Congregations of the Separating Brethren, especially if the following *Reasons*, which have introduced

duced them to do so, and to continue in doing the same, be duly *weighed* and *examined*.

1. Their *rash* and *precipitant Rupture* and *Separation* from the Synod at *Edinburgh* *April* 9. 1747, upon a most *untenible Ground*, viz. the Synod's voting a *Question*, which *carried* to be voted, and against the *stating* of which they were so far from *protesting*; that they themselves *proposed* a *Side* to it, whereby they fairly *submitted* it to the *Judgment* of the *Court*, which of the *two States* should carry, and yet when they were *outvoted*, they *busk* up the *Question* which carried, in the most *hideous Dress* they could contrive; altho' it amounted in plain *Terms* to no more but this, namely, *Whether* a *Decision* anent a *new Question*, never formerly debated in the Church, and carried by *mere Catch* and *Stratagem*; on the *second Week* of a Synod, when more than *one half* of the constituent Members were *absent*. And when several who were present the former Week had *gone Home* without dreading any such *Decision*; *Whether* should such a *Decision*, especially when so circumstantiated, be a *Term* of *Ministerial* or *Christian Communion*, ay and until the making of the same to be so, shall be *referred* by Way of *Overture* to *Presbyteries* and *Kirk-Sessions*, that so the *more general Opinion* of the Church may be had, before any *new Term* of *Communion* be *imposed*, according to the laudible *Barrier Acts* of this Church against *Nova-tions*? This was really the whole of the *Mat-*

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ter; and it carried by a *fair Vote*, that their Decision in *April 1746*, anent the Sinfulness of the *Burgess Oath*, *should not be a Term of Communion*, till it was referred as above. Now, if this was such a *monstruous Question*, as they afterwards pretend to make it, why did they not *protest* against the stating of it? And why did they propose *another Side* to it? They never will be capable to reconcile this Piece of their Conduct, with the Noise and Clamour, they afterwards make about the voting of this Question, as a dropping of the whole of the Lord's Cause and Testimony, a material Abjuration thereof, and allowing of contradictory Oaths, and *what not*, especially when the said Question, was in Consequence of their own Deed at *Stirling*, voting a *Delay* thereof about half a Year before, whereby they gave their full Consent that it should ly upon the *Carpet*, as a Question, which at least might afterwards, be *lawfully put*.

The *Salvo* which (as we are certainly informed) the *Leaders* among them, have lately devised to extricate themselves out of this Difficulty, at their pretended Meeting of Synod at *Edinburgh*, *April 1749*, was to go to the *Bar*, so many of them at once by *Turns*, and confess their Sin, in allowing the Question to be put at *Stirling* *September 1746*, *Whether the Decision in April preceeding anent the Sinfulness of the Burgess Oath, should be a Term of Communion, or not*, and voting a *Delay* of that Question; and likeways their

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Sin in *April 1747*, in allowing the same Question upon the Matter *which* was delayed, to be again proposed, and *putting a Side to it*: And after the usual Form of being removed, and call'd in again, to undergo a *solemn Rebuke in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ the alone Head and King of his Church*, for their said Sins. Altho' this Piece of their Conduct, happening but lately, could have no Influence upon the Synod's Determination, anent supplying of their Congregations, near to twelve Months before, yet for the Sake of these who may be impos'd upon by this awful Scene, the Synod cannot but remark, That their *Confession* seems to be far from being either *free*, or *ingenuous*. It seems not to be *free*, but *extorted* from them, because they could answer to no Body, for making that Vote so sinful and scandalous, to which themselves did put a *Side*, without any Remonstrance against it; else why was it *two Years* after the committing of the Sin, before they make Confession of it? Again, their *Confession* does not seem to be *ingenuous*, else why do they not confess, that it was their Sin to censure their Brethren for stating and carrying that Vote, before they themselves confess'd their Sin in allowing it to be lawful and warrantable, both by carrying a Delay of it for half a Year, and then putting another Side to it? But whereas they proceed immediately, according to the *Proverb*, *first to hang, and then to judge* their Brethren, by finding that they had fallen from all Right

and Title to any present actual Exercise of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and afterwards to pretend to sentence them, with *Suspension Deposition* and *Excommunication*, for no other Reason, but for *stating* and *carrying* the above *Vote*, which themselves allowed to be lawful, by putting a *Side* to it; And whereas they never confessed their Sin of putting a *Side* to the said Question, *till now*, it plainly follows, that it was their Sin to pass any Censure anent that *Vote*, *before this Confession*, because whatever monstrous Names they afterwards give to the *Vote*, yet previous to this late Confession, they *practically* maintain'd that the *Vote* was lawful, by the *Side* which they put to it. And it likewise evidently appears from this their Confession, that they separated from the Synod *under such a Scandal*, as they themselves have now at length found to deserve nothing less, than a *Solemn publick Rebuke in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*; that they have continued *under this Scandal* till *April 1749*; And consequently, besides the Reasons of the Nullity of their Constitution and Proceedings, already published by this Synod, this is one which they have now added themselves, namely, That their new Constitution, Proceedings and Censures were gone in to by *Men confessedly under Scandal*, and no less Scandal than allowing of a *Vote* to be lawful, which they say, has upon the Matter, voted out the Testimony and whole Cause of Christ to the Door. But passing this,

2. Another *Reason* why the *Synod* granted *Supplies* to the Congregations of the Separating Brethren, was their *unparaell'd* and *unprecedented Constitution*, which they would not give up with, arrogating to themselves, tho' plainly the *Minority*, the whole Power and Authority of the Court whereof they sat as Members for several Sederunts, and promised to give in Reasons of some Dissents they had entered, to the same some Months thereafter. Nothing could be more out of the Way, than that the *lesser Part* by far of the Court, upon their being outvoted in a Question, owned at first by themselves to be lawful, should absurdly withdraw upon the *extravagant Declaration* of one of their Number, without any known Commission from the rest, " That the
 " lawful Authority and Power of the Associate
 " Synod is devolved upon, and must ly in a con-
 " stitute Meeting" of Ministers and Elders who were against the *foresaid* Vote, namely, transmitting the Consideration of a new Term of Communion to inferior Judicatories, before it was imposed; and " That the *foresaid*
 " Members ought—to take up and exercise
 " the Authority and Power of the Associate
 " Synod lawfully and fully devolved upon
 " them;" and accordingly that upon this *Declaration*, without making any *Secession* from the greater Part, which was the *only orderly Step* left them, without subverting Presbyterian Parity, they should meet next Day, and *assert*, and *further assert*, That they were the
 only

only Associate Synod, and had the whole Power and Authority of that Court whereof they were the smallest Number, fully devolved on them, is a Piece of Conduct so antisciptural and irrational, that it will not be found, in all its Circumstances, to have any precedent among the *wildest Schismatics* that have appeared in any Period of the Christian Church.

3. Their *dogmatick* and *arbitrary Acts* and *Proceedings*, which they pretended to pass, upon the same *sandy Foundation* of their own *bare Assertion*, upon which they had erected the *new Fabrick* of their *Constitution* immediately before; such as, Their *finding* that the Ministers and Elders whom they left sitting in a constitute Court, *April 9, 1747*, with the *Moderator* and *Clerk*, had *separated* from them, when some Hundreds were Witnesses not only of their *local Motion* from the Place where the Synod was sitting, but likewise their pretending to carry away the Power and Authority of the Court whereof they were by far the lesser Part, along with them, which was *Separation* with a *Witness*. Their *finding* that none of the *Ministers* and *Elders*, whom they left behind them in Synod as aforesaid, should have a *Seat* with them in their new constitute Court, but in a Way of confessing that it was their Sin, to state and carry a Vote (to which they themselves did put a Side) for transmitting to inferiour Judicatories, the Consideration of a new Term of Communion, before it was imposed as a Yoke upon the

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Neck of the Disciples, which the whole World can never prove to be contrary either to Scripture or Reason. Their *finding* that none of the Associate Presbyteries and Sessions can be lawful in their Constitution and Proceedings, but in a Way of Subordination to their new Constitution; whereby they pretend at one Stroke to *exaustrate* and *annihilate* lawful Courts of Christ, for no other Reason, but because they cannot, without looking before them, blindly and implicately *jump in* to the same Mire with themselves. And accordingly they further *find*, that only these Elders of the respective Congregations who shall be disposed to subordinate to them, together with a Minister of the same Disposition, can make up the lawful and rightly constitute Sessions in these Associate Congregations. And because the whole Presbytery of *Glasgow* at that Time, excepting one Elder, were standing upon the former Grounds of Secession upon which they had left the prevailing Party in the corrupt Judicatories of the Church, therefore they *find* that the said Associate Presbytery cannot be lawful in their Constitution and Proceedings, nor be lawfully acknowledged as such, until the said Presbytery shall go out into the new and untrodden Paths into which they themselves had rashly and precipitantly run. And they *foolishly find* what they had no Reason to expect from the Bulk of that Presbytery, namely, That none of them can take a Seat as Members of the *new* Constitution, but in a Way of con-

confessing their Sin of being Members of the
old. They *find* likeways that none of the *Pro-*
bationers in the Secession can lawfully preach
 the Gospel as Probationers, but in Subordina-
 tion to them. These are *new* and *strange*
Discoveries indeed, which no Sett of Men up-
 on Earth had ever *found out the like before*,
 (except the *Fathers* of the *Inquisition*, and
 those of that *Gang*) even that Men should
 forfeit their Offices and Characters (and why
 not Life also if the civil Sword were in their
 Hand?) without being *tryed*, or so much as
heard, and that for no other Offence, but be-
 cause they cannot give up their *Conscience* and
Reason, to the mere *dogmatick* and *arbitrary*
Will and Pleasure of others, who want to *lord*
it over God's Heritage. But to crown all, af-
 ter they had upon the Matter, as above, ex-
 auctorated their Brethren, Ministers and El-
 ders, who could not fall in with their Mea-
 sures, as if this were of small Consequence,
 they do most inconsistently "*find*, that they
 "ought, in due Time, and as the Lord
 "shall clear their Way, to consider upon
 "calling them unto an Account for their
 "Conduct, according to the Order and
 "Discipline of the Lord's House." From
 whence it evidently follows, that all the odd
 Things they found above, were inconsistent
 with, and contrary to the Order and Discipline
 of the House of God. Moreover it is to be
 noticed, that their *due Time* of considering
 upon calling their Brethren to an Account came

on within *six Days* after the strange Proceedings above narrated, when the Synod was risen, and their Brethren gone Home, and knew nothing of what they were transacting. This leads unto a

4th Reason of granting *Supplies* to their Congregations petitioning for the same, Namely, the *Antiscriptural* and *tyrannical Censures* which they pretended to inflict upon their Brethren, such as their *finding without the least Shadow of Process*, that their Brethren had fallen from all present actual Exercise of the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, that they were not at present *Ministers of Christ*. Such *Summary* and *Arbitrary Procedure*, never had a *Paralel* among sober Men; to resolve to proceed against their Brethren in *due Time*, according to the Order and Discipline of the Lord's House, and within *six Days* thereafter, to break over the Boundaries of all Order, and without Citation or Warning to *suspend* them from the Exercise of their Office, is such a Piece of Conduct, as will be to the *lasting Stain* of the *Authors* of it, and will be a *standing Discovery* of the *Spirit* whereby they were acted; which further discovered itself in their Behaviour upon the Back of the above unprecedented Step; for immediately they fill the whole Country, with the most *invidious* and *calumnious Reflections* upon their Brethren, That they had *dropped the whole Testimony* adopted by them, *allowed of contradictory Oaths*, *ensured the*

Consciences of Men, buried the Truth, Cause and Interest of Christ, obstinately subverted the Order of his House, that none ought to hear them, converse with them, or read their Writings on this Controversy, and a great many odious and injurious Insinuations of that Kind, whereby they endeavoured to prejudice the Minds of the People against their Brethren to the highest Degree, and prepare them to digest whatever further Severities might be devised to render their Names and Characters as infamous as they could: Accordingly when they saw that the above extraordinary and unprecedented Step, of finding behind Backs, and without Process, that their Brethren were not Ministers of Christ, nor ought to be owned by any as such, had not such Weight with the People as they intended, they proceed to repeat the same pretended Censure, in a more open and formal Manner, first by suspending their Brethren and then deposing, and excommunicating them from sealing Ordinances, with Certification that they would deliver them over to Satan, if they did not come in to their Measures against a certain Time, which they had all moral Evidence their Brethren could never do, without offering the greatest Violence to Reason and Revelation both. However, as these pretended Censures were founded upon a Libel after Sentence, as is evident from their above Conduct, so it is Matter of Thankfulness to the Lord, that they never have yet been capable, and we hope never shall, to

prove

prove that we are chargeable with any Immorality in Practice, or Error in Doctrine, or that we have dropped any divine Truth, and therefore their pretended Sentences cannot be binding either in *Heaven* or *Earth*. Tho' they seem to *hate us*, and *cast us out* for his Names Sake, yet we trust he shall appear to our Joy, and they shall be ashamed.

5. Their depriving Elders of their scriptural Right of Eldership in Ecclesiastical Judicatories by asserting in the Declaration which Mr. Thomas Mair read immediately before they separated, and upon which they founded their Constitution next Day, That Ministers are the proper Judges in Controversies of Faith and Cases of Conscience, whereby they very plainly insinuated, that Elders are not proper Judges in these Matters, and if, according to this, Elders be not Judges of the Doctrine denied or injured, how can they be Judges of the Censure deserved? And in as much as they separated and constitute upon this Principle, among others, it is plain that they sat down upon a Foundation directly opposite to *Presbytery*, and everfive of all *presbyterian Government*, assuming to themselves as Ministers, the sole Power of judging in all Ecclesiastick Matters, every one of which must certainly be a Matter of Faith or Case of Conscience, otherways it would not be competent to an Ecclesiastick, but a Civil Court; and making more Cyphers of Elders, who, according to the Scripture, and our Form of

Church Government founded thereon, have a *Right and Title* to judge in all Ecclesiastick Matters *equally* with *Ministers*, as the uniform Practice of this Church ever since the Reformation doth clearly evince; and all who have written in Defence of the Constitution and Government thereof, do strenuously assert, such as *Rutherford, Gillespey, Principal Forrester* and others. This Scheme plainly lays a Foundation for Ministers assuming a *Negative* to themselves over Elders, and consequently paves the Way for a *Diocesan* and *domineering Power* in Ministers, never given them by the glorious Head of the Church in his Word.

6. Their *imposing new Terms of Communion* upon the Consciences of the Lord's People in a most arbitrary and dogmatick Manner, by their own pretended Authority, without the least Shadow of a Warrant from Scripture, or the Practice of any reformed Church agreeable thereunto, as is evident in the above Petition and Representations from their several Congregations.

For *these Reasons* the Synod judged it was and is their necessary Duty from the Word of God, to grant *Supply of Preaching* to these in the Congregations of the Separating Brethren applying for the same, and declaring, that they could not in their Consciences submit to such heavy Yokes as were impos'd upon them, but that they behoved to testify against the above sinful Measures and Practices, by *withdrawing from every Brother that walked*

disorderly. The *Synod* was likewise induced to grant the Request of the Petitioners, from the Consideration of the very *End* and *Design* of the *Secession*, which was to relieve God's oppressed Heritage thro' the Land, and they looked upon the Complainers to be more grievously oppressed by the Separating Brethren, than ever they were by the corrupt Party in the *present Judicatories* of this Church from whom they made *Secession*. Moreover, it had no small Weight with the Synod to proceed to this Step, that all the Pains they had taken upon these Brethren, was utterly fruitless, altho' a *Letter* was sent to them from the *Members* of this *Synod*, in an *Extrajudicial Capacity*, in *June 1747* within less than *three Months* after their Separation, desiring a *friendly Meeting* with them for Prayer and Conference upon the Subject of our present Differences, yet nothing was returned but *haughty* and *imperious Refusals*, as will appear from the said *Letter* and *Answers* thereto, insert upon the *Margin*. *

Yet

* Altho' the *foresaid Letter* and *Answers* were formerly published in a *Pamphlet*, intitled, *A Narrative of the Separation of the Majority of Members from the Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline* P. 51, &c. Yet for the Sake of the Reader who may not have the said *Pamphlet* at Hand, the *Synod* thought it proper to give them a Place here. The *Letter* sign'd by Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, in Name of the rest of the Brethren, and directed to the Rev. Mr. *Thomas Mair* Minister of the Gospel at *Orwell*, is as follows,

R. D. B.

Yet notwithstanding of the said unbrotherly Treatment, the Synod sent them another Letter in April 1748, which is insert above, desiring again (even after they had begun their pretended *Censuring Work*) a Meeting with them, as in the former Letter, for Prayer and Conference upon the Subject of our present Differ-

R. D. B.

The Members of the Associate Synod that met in this Place, having in the Interval of one of their Meetings, communed together extrajudicially, anent the Circumstances which you and we are brought into in adorable Providence; and considering, that whereas it is supposed there are two Associate Synods at present, acting in Opposition to one another, what fatal and pernicious Consequence this must necessarily have among the People under our Inspection, both in this Country and elsewhere is evident, as tending natively to break and rend them to Pieces, and consequently, marring the Success of the Gospel; and hindering the Progress of witnessing Work among them; and opening the Mouths of Enemies against the Testimony for the covenanted Reformation, we all equally profess to maintain; and thus hardning the present Generation in their Atheism, Infidelity, and Opposition to the Way of God and Godliness, and to the Name and Honour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore the Brethren were unanimously of Opinion, that however wide the present Breach is made in holy Providence between you and them, yet it is their Duty to pursue Peace with their Brethren, even when it seems to fly from them, and to endeavour that no Mean be neglected on their Part, for healing the Breach, and preventing the Continuation of such a dismal Rupture. For this End, they agree to propose unto you, that there be a Meeting betwixt you and them, in order to Prayer and Conference, for trying whether it is possible we can be brought

Differences, and particularly upon the Matter of the *Petitions* which came from their *Congregations*, but they were so far from complying with this *reasonable Demand*, that they *disdain'd* to give the least *Return*: From all which

brought to coalesce in the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace; and for endeavouring as it becomes these that love the Truth and Peace, to be found (in the Use of such appointed Means) waiting upon him who is the God of Peace, that can bruise Satan under their Feet; and saying, *Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten and will bind us up.* That the Design of the foresaid Proposal might not be frustrate, the Brethren did not chuse to make it in a judicial Way, nor intend the Conference should be upon the Footing of Church-authority, but merely as Brethren equally bound by our Covenant of Peace and Love, to cultivate Harmony in the Lord, that his Name may yet be honoured among us, his People cemented, and his Work advanced. This in the Name, and at the Desire of the Brethren here, is from,

R. D. B.

Your's most affectionately in the Lord,

Stirling, June

19th 1747.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.

P. S. With Submission it is propos'd, that the Time and Place of Meeting be at *Dunfermline*, Tuesday the 21st of *July*. Your Answer is expected as soon as possible, that in case the Motion is refused, I may have Access to prevent the unnecessary up-coming of the Brethren at that Time.

I need not add, in Regard the Nature of the Thing bears it, that this be communicate to all the Brethren in Connection with you on your Side of the River. Another Copy of what is above is sent to Mr. *Gib*, to be communicate to the Brethren concern'd on the South-side of *Forth*.

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which the Synod could not but conclude, that they were *resolutely bent* upon continuing in their *Separation* and *Schism*; and therefore could not any longer delay, *answering* the *repeated Demands* of their People for *Supply* of Preaching and other Church Privileges.

From what has been above observed, anent the *schismatical* and *sinful* Practices of the Separating

The ANSWERS by Mr. Mair and Mr. Gib in Name of others of their Brethren, printed from the *Originals*; and both of them directed to the Rev. Mr Ebenezer Erskine Minister of the Gospel at *Stirling*, are as follow,

R. and D. B.

• I received your Missive, which I communicated to the
 • Brethren who were met here; we are heartily sorry for
 • the present Posture of Affairs, but desire to adore the Lord
 • in his Dispensations of Providence, hoping that though
 • they are humbling to us, yet by them he will exalt him-
 • self. The Affair you write of concerns the Associate
 • Synod; and the Method of Coalescence you mention, or
 • the Way of being received back to a Seat in the Synod,
 • is notour to you, and the Brethren with you, from the
 • Acts and Proceedings of the Synod; from all which it is
 • easy to learn how you are to apply yourselves unto them
 • at their Meeting the first Tuesday of *August* next. Though
 • it is our Endeavour to pray heartily for you every Day,
 • and although we do maintain all due Regard to you and
 • the Brethren, yet your Proposals are absolutely inconsis-
 • tent with supporting the Testimony of the Day, which
 • we could shew from many Reasons, most of which we be-
 • lieve, may easily occur to yourselves, and which we for-
 • bear to narrate particularly, lest it should rather prove irri-
 • rating, than a Mean of softning you. Wishing the Lord may
 • incline you to fall in with the healing Measures laid down
 • in the Acts of the Synod, and make you sensible how far
 • you have increased your Fault, by constituting yourselves

parating Brethren, it is obvious that there is Abundance of Ground, to proceed against them with the *Censures* of the Church, and the *Synod* are of Opinion that they *justly deserve* to be *processsed* for that End: But as some Things are *lawful* which are *not expedient*, So the Synod did not judge it *expedient at present*, to take any Step that Way, but entirely to *delay* and *supercede* the Consideration of *essaying* to reclaim their offending Brethren, in the Way of *exercising Church Discipline* by *Suspension*, &c. till the Lord in his adorable Providence, should pave the Road for such Procedure, so as that there might be some Probability of the *Ends* thereof being *answered*; and in the mean Time to *supply*, or even *plant* the Congregations of such as remain obstinate in their present Course, without *censuring them immediately*, or *before hand*, any other Way

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unwarrantably into a pretended Synod; and offering dutiful Respects to you, and the Brethren with you, This in Name, and at the Desire of all the Brethren here, is all at present from,

R. and D. B.

Your affectionate Brother,

And humble Servant in the Lord,

Muckart, June
24th 1747.

THOMAS MAIR.

V. R. D. F.

Having received your Letter of June 19th, and having embraced the first proper Occasion for communicating the same to my Brethren concern'd on this Side of the River, by doing so betwixt Sederunts, to such of them as met here this Week in Presbytery; the Answer now made is common.

than by *granting* said *Supplies*. Neither is this, in some Cases, any Breach of the Order of the House of God, but a tender Regard to the Discipline thereof, as will appear from the following *Grounds* upon which the Synod went in this *Affair*.

I. The *Apostle* exhorts us *Rom. iv. 19.* to follow after the Things which make for Peace, and Things wherewith one may edify another, and *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* Let all Things be done to edifying; from whence it follows, that the great *End* of all Ecclesiastick Discipline, is the *Glory of God* in the *Edification* of his Church, as well as of the Offending Party. And whereas it appears, from the *furious* and *mad-like* Conduct of the Separating Brethren, that

As to the mournful Circumstances which we are brought into with some dear Fathers and Brethren, we desire both to seek and submit to the Healing thereof, in all suitable Ways: But we have no Freedom to fall in with the Proposal made by the Brethren you speak of; considering, on the one Hand, that they have plainly interwoven with their Proposal, an Assertion of their Synodical Constitution, a Justification of their own Conduct in the present Affair, and a Condemnation of the Associate Synod;—and considering, on the other Hand, that the Affair writ of is the Synod's Work, which is *hactenus judicata*,—so that the Method of Coalescence is already concluded upon.

But not chusing to enlarge here, the above is offered, and in Name of the Brethren foresaid,—with dutiful Respects to the Brethren with you, by,

V. R. D. F.

Your's respectfully,

Edin. July

11th 1747.

ADAM GIB.

that their Spirits are at present *dreadfully*, tho' most *unreasonably exasperated*, to whom therefore Church Censures, in such Circumstances, could not seasonably be applied; and likewise that many of the People are sadly impos'd upon, by their bold and calumnious Reflections upon their Brethren, together with their high Pretences to uncommon Reformation, which may also influence some serious and well-meaning Christians, like the *two hundred Men* who went with *Absalom*, to judge well of their Conduct thro' *Simplicity*, not knowing any Thing of the dangerous Nature and Tendency thereof; for *this Reason*, the Synod were of the Judgment, that in such a *Circumstantiate Case*, it would neither be for the *Edification* of the *Church of God*, nor of our *offending Brethren* themselves, to proceed at present to any Process for inflicting Church Censure upon them; and therefore, according to the *Apostolick Directions* above mentioned, *what does not make for edifying ought to be superceded at the Time*.

II. In as much as the *Separating Brethren* have pretended, not only to suspend and depose the *Ministers* of *this Synod* from the Office of the holy Ministry, but likewise to *excommunicate* them from Sealing Ordinances; and have even proceeded to deliver some of them to *Satan*, not only in manifest Violation (if they were a *Court of Christ*) of an approved *Rule* of this Church, "That nothing ought to be admitted by any Church Judicatory,

“ as a Ground of a Process for Censure, but
 “ what hath been declared censurable by the
 “ Word of God, or some Act, or universal
 “ Custom of this National Church agreeable
 “ thereto;” But also in Opposition to what
 their *own Consciences* cannot but *dictate* to
 them, unless they are given up to very *strong*
Delusion, namely, that it must be an *heinous*
Sin to attempt to *stigmatize* the *Characters* of
 Ministers of Jesus Christ, who, they cannot but
 know, have all along endeavoured to appear
 as *firmly*, according to their Measure, in the
 Interest of his Kingdom, as any of themselves
 ever could *pretend to*, and against whom no-
 thing can be alledged either as to their *Conver-*
sation or *Doctrine*. But, tho’ this *Synod* have
 just Ground to proceed to the *Ordinary Censures*
 of the Church upon these Brethren, they hav-
 ing been *manifestly guilty* of what hath been
 declared *Censurable* by the Word of God, and
 the Acts and universal Custom of this Church
 agreeable thereto; yet as *Mutual Censures*
 and *Excommunications* would be a great *Scan-*
dal in the Church, and evidently tend to her
Destruction, quite contrary to the *true End*
 and *proper Use* of that *Power* and *Authority*,
 which Christ has given to the *Office-Bearers*
 of his House, which is to be employed for the
Edification and not for the *Destruction* thereof,
 according to 2 Cor. x. 8. and Chap. xiii. 10.
 The *Synod*, for this Reason, did not judge it
 proper, at *this Time*, to proceed in any further
Step of *Censure* upon them, than a *judicial*

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Condemnation of their Ways. Besides, as the Censures which the *Separating Party* have already pretended so unwarrantably to pass, have opened the *Mouths of Adversaries*, hardened the Generation in their Apostacy, alienated the Minds of many, from any Thoughts of espousing a Testimony against the Defections of the Times, and brought all Church Discipline, in a great Measure, into Contempt; So, if such Censures were mutual, these sad and dismal Effects would be more increased, and the fatal Influence of them more palpably felt.

III. When Ministers are drench'd in *Schismatical Principles and Practices*, and are drawing away many *Disciples after them*, and refuse to be reformed; in this Case, the Duty of the Lord's Remnant, who desire to keep their Garments clean, is plain from the Word, 2 *Thes.* iii. 6. *We command you Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.* Rom. xvi. 17. *Mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* Neither is it always necessary, that, to warrant this withdrawing, the Church Representative should previously proceed to inflict the Censures of *Suspension, Deposition and Excommunication* upon such disorderly Walkers; for when the Contagion is somewhat more general, it is most for Edification, to acquiesce for a Time, in a judicial Con-

Condemnation of their Principles and Practices. Thus the Synod at *Ferusalem*, Acts xv. did not only in a judicial Way *vindicate* and *assert the Truth*, in the great Point of Justification by free Grace, in Opposition to the corrupt Doctrine of the *judaizing Teachers*, who cry'd up the Necessity and Merit of Circumcision and the Works of the Law in order to Justification and Salvation, but likeways they *condemned* these *schismatical Principles and Practices* in these Teachers, with the just Censure of going out from the Church, and *troubling them with Words subverting their Souls*, ver. 24. And as the *London Ministers* justly observe, in their *Jus divinum Reg. Eccles.* P. 247. " This was not only a Warning to the Churches, to note such false Teachers, avoid them and withdraw from them,-----but also was a virtual Admonition to these false Teachers themselves, whil'st their Doctrines and Ways were so expressly condemn'd." Just so, the Associate Synod judged it most for Edification, at this Time of so much Darkness and Delusion, to acquiesce for the present, in a *judicial Condemnation* of the *Schismatical Principles*, and *Practices* of their *Separating Brethren*, as they have done, in their *Act* at *Stirling* October 1747 declaring the NULLITY of the pretended Synod that first met in *Mr. Gib's House* in *Bristo* near *Edinburgh*, April 10th said Year; and in Consequence thereof, and of what is above narrated, to supply their Charges, *sisting* any further Pro-

Procedure in a Way of *Censure*, till the Lord in his adorable Providence shall clear it up to be for *Edification* so to do.

IV. When *Multitudes* of old, were misled by *judaizing Zealots*, and carry'd down the Stream of *Delusion*, by the *cunning Craftiness* of them that did ly in *Wait* to deceive, who by feigned *Words* did make *Merchandise* of many, we find that the *Apostles* in this Case, did not proceed immediately to inflict any *Church Censures* but such as appear to be *simular*, to what this *Synod* has done upon these *Teachers*, who had by their pretended *Zeal*, subtilly insinuated themselves into the *Affections* of the *People*, whom they *blindly* and *implicitly* led, but they rest satisfy'd with *declaring their Readiness to do it*, upon a proper *Occasion*, when it should be more for the *general Edification* of the *Church*. *Two Instances* may suffice to illustrate the *Apostolick Example* in this Matter. The *first* is, the *Example* of the *Apostle Paul*, Gal. v. 12. *I would* (says he) *they were cut off which trouble you*. The *Generality* of *Interpreters* by *cutting off* here, understand *Church Censure* by *Excommunication*. But then, why doth the *Apostle* only wish it? Why doth he not *prescribe* or *command* to *excommunicate* them? "To this" (says the learned *Gillespy* in his *Aaron's Rod* P. 287.) "We may either answer as *Beza*, that the " *Apostle Paul's* Authority at that Time, was " *extremely blasted* and *weakned* in the " *Churches of Galatia*. Or thus, The Apo-
" *file*

"file knew, that as the Churches of *Galatia*
 "then stood affected, they were unwilling to
 "excommunicate these whom he means: For
 "which Cause he would not peremptorily
 "command their Excommunication, *renitente*
 "*Ecclesia* (against the Church's Will) but for-
 "beareth for that Season, *wishing for better*
 "*Times.*" To the like Purpose, the same
 Apostle speaks to the Churches of *Corinth*, 2
 Cor. x. 6. *Having in Readiness to revenge*
all Disobedience, when your Obedience is ful-
filled. "The Apostle (says the foresaid Au-
 "thor P. 288, 289.) is in that Chapter con-
 "futing the Calumny of such as said of him,
 "His *Epistles* were weighty and powerful,
 "and did speak of great Things; but when
 "He himself is bodily present, he doth but
 "little, He assumes no great Authority, He
 "is weak, and almost contemptible. In an-
 "swer hereunto, he tells them, The *Wea-*
 "pons of our Warfare, tho' they be not car-
 "nal, yet they are mighty thro' God, to con-
 "quer and captivate Souls to the Obedience
 "of Christ: And as for the stubborn and unruly,
 "we are armed with a Power of *correc-*
 "tive Government, which shall be *more ful-*
 "ly execute in due Time;"-----Even *when*
your Obedience is fulfilled. For, says Gilles-
 py "As *Esthius* and *Novarinus* explain this
 "Passage, It is in vain to excommunicate all
 "such as are worthy of Excommunication,
 "when there is a general Renitency and Un-
 "willingness in the Church; or to cut off a
 "Mem-

“ Member when the same Evil hath infected
 “ either the *whole*, or the *greatest Part* of the
 “ Body.” The *other Instance*, is the *Example*
 of the *Apostle John* with Respect to *Dio-*
trophes, *third Epistle Verses 9, 10.* The Sin
 and Scandal of *Diotrophes* was, that he lov’d
 to have the *Prebeminence*, that he rejected
 the Authority of the *Apostle John*, and *prat-*
ted against him with malicious Words, and was
 so far from being hospitable to the Brethren
 himself, that he *hindred them that would*, and
did cast them out of the Church by pretended
 and unwarrantable Sentences of *Excommunica-*
tion. Now, notwithstanding of these aggra-
 vated Crimes, the *Apostle* does not command
 him to be *presently laid under Censure*, but de-
 clares that He will *order it afterwards*, if
 there is occasion for it, in a *more convenient*
Season; Wherefore (says he *Verse 10.*) *If I*
come, I will remember his Deeds which he
doth: And in the *mean Time* acquiesces in
 giving a *Warning* to the Church, to beware
 of being influenced with such an evil Spirit, as
Diotrophes was acted with, *Verse 11.* *Belov-*
ed, follow not that which is evil, but that which
is good.

It is with Regrete that the *Synod* must ob-
 serve, That the *Separating Brethren*, having
 turned aside so far into *crooked Ways*, as to
 neglect the *scriptural Means of Peace and U-*
nity, by amicable *Meetings for Prayer and*
Conference, to which they were so seriously
 invited *once and again*, are now *righteously*
 left

left of God to their own Counsels, and even to the highest Abuse of the Divine Ordinance of the Greater Excommunication, by pretending, upon the most imaginary Grounds, to give up their Brethren to the Devil, applying the last Remedy, even to a Case wherein they were never able to show the least Malady or Disease to be remedied, except what they have forged by mere Fancy, and supported by gross Calumny, as hath been clearly made appear in several former Papers; yet these Brethren have gone to apply the foresaid Sentence against three Ministers, Members of this Synod, whose Endeavours to remove their Mistakes, in this Hour and Power of Darkness, deserved their Thanks, rather than their Revenge and Resentment, manifested in such an odious and horrible Manner, as cannot but be amazing and astonishing to all the Protestant Churches on the Face of the Earth. Which pretended Sentences pass'd in such a foolish and furious Way against these Brethren, This Synod discerns, not only to be antiscriptural, unreasonable, and according to the Act of Nullity, pass'd by this Synod at Stirling October 1747, do hereby declare the same to be void and null, having no Ecclesiastical Authority, Force or Validity, and such as can by no Means be binding either in Heaven or Earth, But also, looks upon these Steps of Procedure taken by the Separating Brethren, as palpable Evidences and plain Instances of unparalleled Insatiation, such as are spoken of Hos. ix. 7.

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The Prophet is a Fool, the spiritual Man is mad, for the Multitude of thine Iniquity, and the great Hatred. Isa. lxvi. 5. John ix. 34. 35, 39. Chap. xvi. 2. 3d Ep. of John Verses 9, 10, 11.

As our glorious Redeemer, who by the determinate Counsel of God was slain by wicked Hands, is thus openly crucified in his Members, so we desire humbly to adore the Righteousness of God, in permitting such Things to be done by wicked Means, whereby his sacred Ordinances are so dreadfully prostitute, His great and fearful Name so blasphemously profaned, and his holy Religion exposed to Contempt in a strange and unprecedented Manner. And at the same Time, we hereby call all the People under our Inspection, to have no Manner of Regard to any such pretended Censures and Sentences passed, or that may be passed by the Schismatical Meeting of these Separatists, nor suffer themselves to be sinfully moved or shaken thereby, as they regard the Glory of God, the Credit and Success of the Gospel, the Honour and Interest of Religion, and the Salvation of their own Souls; but to disregard and detaste such rash and unwarrantable Sentences and Proceedings, as contrary to the Rule of God's Word, to the Spirit of the Gospel, to the Light of Nature, and to the comely Order of the House of God; least by shewing any Regard thereto, they be found guilty of advancing the Kingdom of Satan, who by these fiery Darts of Temptation,
and

and horrid Acts of Violence, covered with a Mask of flaming Zeal for God, and of Service done to Him, is seeking to destroy immortal Souls, and to shut the Gospel Door which God has opened for their Salvation.

Upon the whole, Altho' the Separating Brethren be treading the Footsteps of *Diotrephes*, in the lordly and domineering Power they assume to themselves, and in the cruel and unwarrantable *Censures* they have presum'd to pass; Yet this Synod, according to the above Patterns, laid out before us in the Word for our Imitation, judge it proper, in this Day of such Division and Delusion, to acquiesce in a judicial Condemnation of the Schismatical Principles and Practices of these Separating Brethren, and in relieving their oppressed People, groaning under the heavy Yokes and grievous Burdens which they have imposed upon them; Likeas the Synod did and hereby do, upon the Grounds above mentioned, together with those contain'd in the Act of Nullity, CONDEMN the said Principles and Practices as Schismatical, and resolve not only to supply the People, whom they have deserted for continuing upon their former Grounds of Secession from the present Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, with Sermon, but likewise, as the Lord shall clear their Way, allow them Moderations in Calls, if they apply for the same in a regular Way; deferring any further Censure, till it shall be found, in the Course of adorable Providence, to be for more general Edification.

To conclude, We desire to imitate the Example of our blessed Lord, and to learn of Him, who is meek and lowly in Heart. Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; When He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: And who has said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. We trust, That the Wrath of Man shall praise Him, and the Remainder thereof He will restrain. Wherein any deal proudly, He will be above them; for He has said, Pride goeth before Destruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall.

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Extracted by

DANIEL COCK Syn. Clk.

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